

Guide to School Security and Safety Plan Standards Version 2.0

February, 2015

The following guidance is intended to assist superintendents and administrators in meeting the requirements of Public Act 13-3, Section 86. Specifically, this summary outlines some of the changes found in Version 2 of the standards, as well as in the plan templates.

- A number of school districts requested more flexibility in implementing the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which includes the Incident Command System (ICS).¹ Version 2 of the standards recognizes these concerns and therefore the language regarding NIMS has been adjusted accordingly (see Standards 2 and 10, and, for example, p. 13 of the plan templates.) It is still strongly recommend that most if not all school staff members take at least the ICS 100SCa on-line course, but it is no longer a requirement. Schools that have provided or encouraged this training will have a staff that better understands how the first responder community operates and how school personnel fit into the process. It remains a requirement that each year, the school principal, or other designated person, must ensure that a short overview of NIMS and ICS is provided to school staff at the beginning of the school year, including information on the ICS courses that are available on line. Emphasis is now also placed on training to the school's plan.
- Municipal first responder entities may provide different guidance to their schools with regard to certain actions taken during an emergency, particularly with regard to window coverings. This latest version of the plan template addresses this concern by removing certain language in the sample letters to staff. Schools districts should communicate with their first responders regarding specific school safety steps.
- Many school districts requested the ability to create one umbrella safety and security plan for the district. The materials sent to school districts therefore now also include a school district plan template. The template allows a district to prepare one master plan that includes a school-specific annex for each of the schools within the district.
- There was some confusion regarding the requirement that fire and crisis response drills must be reviewed and scored (assessed), including uncertainty as to when the required reporting was due. Standard 7 has been amended to make it clear that the first report is due from the board of education to the DESPP/DEMHS² Regional Coordinator with data covering the 2014/2015 school year by July 1, 2015, and annually thereafter. This report will provide an opportunity for the development of best practices and lessons learned.

¹ ICS is the nationally-recognized system by which emergencies are managed. There is a short on-line ICS training course specifically developed for schools (ICS 100 SCa, at <http://training.fema.gov>).

² CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESPP/DEMHS)

- The standards continue to emphasize the involvement of local officials, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the municipality, the superintendent of schools, law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, and emergency medical services, in the development of school security and safety plans. These key partners can assist the individual school safety committees who are responsible for developing and implementing the plan for all staff and student populations, including those with functional needs.
- Annually, each local and regional board of education must review, update as necessary, and submit a school security and safety plan for each school under its jurisdiction to DESPP, based on the standards and the plan templates. The school security and safety plans need to be made an annex to the municipality's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). The board of education should reach out to the municipal Emergency Management Director for assistance in making the plans a part of the LEOP. Regional boards of education should contact the EMDs for the towns they serve. The first plans, covering the school year which began July 1, 2014, should be filed with DEMHS before July 1, 2015.
- Every two years, each local and regional board of education must conduct a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under its jurisdiction and review/update/revise its plans, based on the assessment. The first assessment must be completed for the school year beginning July of 2014, so the next assessment should be completed for the school year beginning July of 2016.
- Each school must provide an orientation on the plan to each school employee at the school, including those who are part-time and/or temporary, and provide violence prevention training in a manner described in the plan. Again, training to the plan is critical. This training should be conducted in cooperation with the school safety and security committee, including local law enforcement, fire, emergency management, public health, and emergency medical services. This will give the school community and municipal officials an understanding of the need for unified planning, preparedness, and response.
- Again this year, there is a requirement that each school construct a reference kit available for first responders, which includes several copies of laminated easy- to- read floor plans; master keys to interior and exterior door locks, and ;other items determined as needed, after consultation with school officials, local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction, emergency management director, and first responders.
- Individuals charged with the development of local all-hazards school security and safety plans should review a complete set of the standards, Version 2, as well as the plan templates and the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, released in June of 2013 by a consortium of federal agencies including the US Department of Education and FEMA. Version 2.0 of the standards is available on the DESPP/DEMHS website:
<http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=4679&Q=553694&PM=1>.